

Testimony of Novlette Williams  
In Support of HB 5366  
Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
March 3, 2020

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Ranking Members, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Novlette Williams, and I am an AARP volunteer from West Hartford. As someone who has struggled to pay for expensive prescription medication, I would like to express my support for H.B. 5366, An Act Concerning the Cost of Prescription Drugs.

I live with congestive heart failure. I have a pacemaker and take multiple medications to stay alive and remain as healthy as possible. Even though I have Medicare Part D coverage, there was a time when I was unable to pay for one of my medications. I still work, but I can barely make it from paycheck to paycheck. I had to start collecting Social Security early due to my health issues, and will therefore receive a reduced benefit for the rest of my life.

Following a major health incident a few years ago, my doctor prescribed a heart medication called Entresto and said that I would need to take it regularly to stay alive. The first time I went to CVS to pick it up, I was shocked to learn that a one-month supply, even with my insurance coverage, was \$416. I did not have the money to pay for my medication, so I went home that day and told myself that maybe it was my time to die. Thankfully, my doctor called to follow up with me, and when I told him that I couldn't pay for my prescription, he was able to give me six months of coupons and samples.

After the coupons and samples ran out, Congressman Larson's office was able to help me access a prescription drug card that has helped me purchase my medication at a reasonable. I am thankful that my doctor followed up with me when he did, but I worry about people who are not as fortunate.

Something needs to change. At the beginning of this year, the list price of Entresto went up 7%. Millions of people like me cannot pay for their prescription medication and rely on help from our doctors and elected officials to stay alive. Meanwhile, prices for prescription medication continue to go up, and there is no relief in sight. H.B. 5366 will help people like me by capping monthly out-of-pocket costs, allowing Connecticut pharmacies to import prescription medication from Canada (Entresto costs about 50% less in Canada), and addressing business practices like pay-for-delay that prevent generic drugs from entering the market.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story. I hope that you will support H.B. 5366 and make it easier for Connecticut residents to pay for their medication.